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DEPT FOR DRL, INL, AND EUR/SCE, NSC FOR BRAUN, USUN FOR
DREW SCHUFLETOWSKI, USOSCE FOR STEVE STEGER

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SUBJECT: KOSOVO: NEW ASSEMBLY SPEAKER PLEDGES CLOSE
COOPERATION

Classified By: COM TINA KAIDANOW FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In her introductory call on new Assembly Speaker Jakup Krasniqi, COM pointed to the importance of the Assembly in passing Ahtisaari final settlement legislation and Kosovo's new Constitution at the appropriate time, expeditiously and without change. COM also reiterated that movement on selecting Kosovo's new state symbols, which Krasniqi had been discussing in the media, can only move forward under the terms agreed to in July and in accord with Ahtisaari guidelines. Krasniqi acknowledged this and expressed appreciation for USG support to the Assembly, saying he was committed to deepening the institution's work with its international partners. Krasniqi also noted positively Serb participation in the new Assembly, and promised the body would work to ensure that minority rights comport with the Kosovo Standards and the Ahtisaari proposal. We will work to maintain a productive relationship with Krasniqi, and are reviewing what assistance we can provide to the Assembly. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On January 15, in her first official meeting with Jakup Krasniqi since his January 9 election as Assembly Speaker, COM congratulated him and emphasized the significance of the Assembly's role in the coming critical weeks for Kosovo. COM discussed the issues which would required careful attention by the Assembly and close coordination with USOP: approval of Ahtisaari final status legislation and of Kosovo's new Constitution, and the actual wording of the coming declaration of independence. She added that the Assembly's correct actions on all three issues would signal to many countries that Kosovo is on the right path and deserving of recognition; for this reason, she urged that there be wide consensus on the content before they reached the Assembly, making the process fast and simple.

¶3. (C) Krasniqi acknowledged the importance of smooth passage for the Ahtisaari laws and the need for close coordination on the crucial issues of the Constitution and the independence declaration. He expressed concern that the Assembly does not have the capacity to do all that will be asked of it in this regard, and said he plans to request more international assistance to increase the Assembly's functionality. (Note:

The Assembly Support Initiative, a consortium of the National Democratic Institute (NDI), OSCE, and the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR), assisted the Assembly in the previous mandate. The EAR project ends at the end of January and OSCE does not anticipate surviving independence. NDI has several staff working with Assembly committees on technical issues and is currently advertising for a senior international advisor, likely a former minister or parliamentarian, to continue working with the Assembly. We are reviewing the NDI program to ensure Krasniqi has appropriate support in the coming weeks. End Note.)

¶5. (C) In his first two days as Assembly Speaker, Krasniqi raised the issue of Kosovo's symbols as something to resolve right away. COM reminded him of the process begun in July by which hundreds of flag and symbol proposals were vetted (by both international and Kosovar stakeholders, including minority representatives) to ensure compliance with Ahtisaari guidelines (in particular that the flag reflect Kosovo's multi-ethnic character). COM emphasized that when the process continues it must be with the 800 or so approved proposals, and also should include opposition representation to ensure Assembly passage. Krasniqi agreed to move forward with vetted proposals and an inclusive commission, perhaps adding some civil society experts.

¶6. (C) COMMENT: The Assembly has some critical tasks before it, as it will be responsible for a significant portion of status-related moves. We will continue to nurture our relations with Krasniqi, and are reviewing what assistance we can provide to the Assembly. At the same time, we are reaching out to all parties -- government and opposition -- to lay out the international community's expectation of the Assembly. END COMMENT.
KAIDANOW